



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

RUSSIA

Working with Russian Partners in Democracy

USAID in Russia

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) carries out U.S. Government-funded development programs in more than 100 countries, including Russia. USAID works in partnership with Russia and Russians at all levels to address issues of mutual interest. USAID works directly with international development organizations such as the United Nations and its sister agencies, the World Bank, and the Red Cross. USAID's programs also involve indirect cooperation with local and federal Russian Government agencies in crucial areas such as judicial reform, social and economic policy, and the administration of health and social services.

USAID's Democratic Initiatives

USAID's democratic initiatives build avenues for citizen participation in civil society, strengthen the rule of law, advocate for human rights, and help local government respond to citizens' needs.

USAID's programs mainly focus on the transition to a more participatory democratic society. USAID provides essential support to civil society through grants to Russian non-government organizations working on advocacy, social service delivery, and policy reform. USAID assists Russians working with independent media outlets in radio, print, and television to provide high-quality, socially-relevant material. USAID encourages exchanges of information and experience between Russian and American judicial bodies.



An annual disability film festival, organized by Russian disability rights NGO *Perspektiva* and funded by USAID, showcases hundreds of films from 20 countries. These films promote positive images of disabled people and educate the Russian public on disability issues.

Transformation: The last decade has seen major development of a civil society with thousands of NGOs taking up delivery of social services, advocacy of human rights, and accountability in governance. In contrast to the situation at the national level, regional independent media continues to gain financial strength, increasing informative news programming in the regions.

Despite shortcomings in certain high-pressure, high-profile cases, there has been tangible improvement in certain aspects of the judicial system and growing numbers of citizens are seeking recourse with success in the courts. At the local level, governments have instituted public hearings that allow citizens to participate in the decision-making

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Civic Action and Non-Governmental Organizations

USAID works with citizen groups and civic organizations to help them advance the interests of their constituencies and advocate for policy reforms that respond to the most pressing public priorities. USAID also assists the work of individual groups in support of such efforts as volunteerism, civic education, community schooling initiatives, pluralism and tolerance, and public awareness campaigns.

Support to Independent Media

USAID supports independent regional television and newspaper publishers' associations to enhance the profitability and viability of media outlets and the objectivity of news reporting. USAID supports regional print and broadcast media to pursue professionalism, independence, editorial excellence, and public service.

Effective Local Governance

USAID provides support to strengthen institutions of local self-governance to provide for local citizens needs. The most challenging and promising area is the improvement of the system of social assistance. Working with its Russian partners, USAID helps develop new models of effective social program administration, including transparent budget planning and citizen input on budget and program priorities.

Legal and Human Rights

USAID aims to help Russian partners increase public awareness of legal and human rights, improve the transparency, efficiency, and independence of the judicial system, and assist NGOs in the legal system and advocate for their constituencies. Judicial reform activities benefit Russian reformers through the dissemination of ideas and best practices in U.S. judicial administration, governance, and ethics, notably through high-level exchanges.

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Key USAID Successes at a Glance

Explosion of civil society

organizations: The United States has been the largest contributor to the growth of approximately 500,000 Russian civil society organizations that have inspired citizen activism on key issues, mobilized hundreds of thousands of volunteers, and created a new relationship between the public and local government.

Electoral system and political

processes: U.S. assistance has helped to educate citizens on their rights and strengthen political party formation in Russia.

Independent media: USAID grants helped stave off the bankruptcy of more than 500 regional independent television stations, reaching more than 50 million people after the 1998 market crash.

Improved legal and human rights:

USAID has worked with reformers within the system to encourage independence, increase professionalism, and improve administration and judicial self-government.

Support for policy reform: U.S. assistance has created economic think tanks that have informed public debate and shaped key public policy decisions on fundamental issues of property, tax, finance, and fiscal decentralization – advising both national and local governments.